Interview Date: April 2, 2011

Interviewers: Molly Farrand and Amanda Halter

Interviewee: Randy Cook

Name: Staff Sergeant Randy Cook

Amanda: Residence?

Staff Sergeant Cook: Elko Nevada

Molly**:** Parents' Names?

Staff Sergeant Cook: I have two sets: Lucile and Kelton Cook and Louise and LaVern Ishmael

Amanda: Spouse(s)'s Name(s)?

Staff Sergeant Cook: Dianne first wife, Cynthia current wife.

Molly**:** Did the Korean War impact when and whom you married? If so, please explain.

Staff Sergeant Cook: I was already married when I joined, so it did not impact my marriage.

Amanda: Occupations, with approximate years?

Staff Sergeant Cook: Before I joined the military I worked at a tire shop in 1971. Then I joined the military at age 19. After the military I worked at a recycling office for about 2 years. Then went to work at a welfare office for two years, and then came here and I am now the current building manager.

Amanda: Elective Offices Held?

Staff Sergeant Cook: None.

MILITARY QUESTIONS-GENERAL:

Molly: In which branch of service did you enlist? Did you have a reason for choosing this branch?

Staff Sergeant Cook: Air Force. I chose the Air Force because it was the safest branch to be in because I came in during the Vietnam War in 1971. Also I had a cousin in there and I wanted a way to see him. He worked on the B-52 bombers.

Amanda: What years did you serve in the military?

Staff Sergeant Cook: 20 years, 1971-1991.

Amanda: Where did you serve in the military?

Staff Sergeant Cook: California, Okinawa, Thailand, South Dakota, Korea, Utah, Saudi Arabia.

Molly: Was you wife with you during those deployments?

Staff Sergeant Cook: Actually when I went to Okinawa, Thailand, Korea and Saudi Arabia my wife stayed back in the states.

Amanda: Do you have any children?

Staff Sergeant Cook: I have 5 daughters. I feel lucky.

Molly: Can you tell us a little bit more about Korea?

Staff Sergeant Cook: Korea… it was hot during the summer, and cold during the winter; colder than it gets here. In 1977 the winter turned really bad, we lost our heating and fuel due to the cold, a week before Christmas when it went out and two weeks after New Years when we got heat back to the barracks. Showers were a quick in and out, the food was canned because they couldn't heat up the food that well. I kept my hands way over the typewriter because I was an office clerk. It was cold over there, nothing compared to over here, this is not bad weather. I was over there a year. I don't know if you have heard about the two Americans killed in 1976 on the DMZ. There was a tree that was blocking the view of the DMZ on the north side. The Americans went over to chop the tree down, and the North Koreans came over and killed both the Americans, and killed five or six of the South Koreans in the process. During that time frame when the Americans were killed, I went to battle staff being a clerical type person. They issued me a weapon and told me that if anyone came through the door to shoot them if they were not American. They were sand bagging the entrance to the building with a 50 caliber machine gun. We were told that there were no other planes leaving so we were there if a war broke out. I worked with a full bird colonel that was in charge of three radar sights of the DMZ. Every three months we visited every radar sight.

I never had the chance to see my cousin.

My longest time was a year when I was in Thailand and Korea. I was deployed four times total. In Japan I was with the 1st SRS, which was a spy plane and we were taking pictures of North Korea and North Vietnam during the war. In Saudi Arabia I was with the U2-TR1 program which was a spy plane that was taking pictures of Iraq and Iran.

Amanda: What about communication? Did you have the chance to talk to your family?

Staff Sergeant Cook: A lot of it was mail. I had three telephone calls when I was in Saudi Arabia for a year.

Molly: Had your parents been in the military?

Staff Sergeant Cook: My father was in WWII.

Amanda: So over all was it a positive experience for you?

Staff Sergeant Cook: Yes very much so. I would not change my mind. If I had to do it again I would still join the Air Force.

Molly: Did you work along side other branches or were you pretty separate?

Staff Sergeant Cook: Each service had their own base, so I was just around the Air Force. We never intermingled mainly because of the rivals.